

PAINTING & DECORATING

Usually the first home improvement job undertaken by the average person is painting and decorating. Very often this is carried out by people with little or no past experience.

The purpose of this leaflet is to suggest decorating techniques and products that turn a quick cover job into one that you can be proud of, without some of the usual problems and pitfalls.

These jobs are attempted for numerous reasons, one of the most common being an urgent need to get a coat of paint onto unsightly woodwork or walls of a house just purchased.



Paint is not just something applied for decorative purposes. It also serves to protect the surfaces to which it is applied.

A number of factors play an important part in achieving good protective and decorative work. The most important are:

1. Selecting the correct paint for the job
2. Using the most suitable tools
3. Preparing surfaces
4. Applying the paint

Plus: THE TOP TEN GOLDEN RULES OF PAINTING

1. Always read instructions on the paint can carefully and follow them
2. Use access equipment properly. Don't take short cuts
3. Wear sensible clothing and, especially, masks or other items designed to protect you
4. Use the right tools for the job. Wickes stock them
5. Select the correct paint for the purpose. An interior paint will not last long outside
6. Only paint when conditions are suitable
7. Two thin coats of paint are always better than one thick coat
8. Clean utensils immediately after use. Do not allow paint to dry on brushes or rollers
9. Plan the work carefully
10. Prepare surfaces properly. Bad preparation means a poor finish that will not last

SELECTING AND UNDERSTANDING PAINT

Traditionally, water-based paints were used on walls and ceilings, and solvent-based paints for wood and metal but times have changed. This leaflet should dispel that myth; give you an idea of the many paint varieties available, their preparation and uses.

Another thing to consider is that legislation is changing the way paints are formulated, so, the paint you are about to use may have subtly changed from that of a year ago. An example of this is the reduction in VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) in solvent based paints. This has the effect of increasing the drying time, no matter which brand you use, and because of this, it is very important you read the product instructions before use.

Coverage and drying times are only a guide, in real life, how the paint is applied, the porosity of the surface, ambient temperature, humidity and amount of ventilation will all have an effect.

KEEP INFORMED

- Look for other Good Idea Leaflets that could help you with your current project.
- Check that your Good Idea Leaflets are kept up to date. Leaflets are regularly changed to reflect product changes so keep an eye on issue dates.
- If you would like to be put on our mailing list for the Wickes booklet, call our Freephone number which is:

0500 300 328

- Visit our website on www.wickes.co.uk

In general, the thicker the applied layer of paint is the longer you should wait to apply a second coat.

Just a quick glance along the shelves of Wickes will give you some idea of the number of different types of paint available.

What is paint. Paint is a mix of pigments - colours - held along with binders suspended in a liquid. The liquid may be no more than water or it may be a more complicated mix of natural or man-made resins. When the paint is applied to a surface the liquid evaporates leaving just the pigment and the binders as a surface coating.

Water-based trim paints

Some years ago most paints used on wood and metal were solvent based but as the demand for low odour and less volatile paint has increased, coupled with legislative changes, water-based paint technology has rapidly improved to meet the challenge. Modern water-based trim paints are now as good, and in some cases better than the solvent based equivalent.

What are the main characteristics of this type of paint?

It is low odour and suitable for use around most people who are sensitive to solvents, its quick drying – so finish the job in a day, its much whiter and stays that way for longer, colours also remain truer and its very durable. Traditional solvent based paints dry and become brittle over time, water-based paints remain slightly softer and more flexible as time goes on. This allows the paint to move with the substrate and reduces the likelihood of breakdown. The gloss finish is just slightly less than an equivalent solvent paint but this is only evident when used side by side. There are subtle differences when brushing out but it is just as easy to use. When wet, splashes wipe off with a damp cloth, and best of all, when you've finished, you can wash the brushes in water. Like all water-based paints, it must be stored where it won't freeze as it contains water, and you should be careful not to use in direct sun, or on very hot summer days, as it dries quite quickly.

Drying and drying times

A manufacturers' quoted drying time is just a guide. It assumes the paint is applied correctly onto a well prepared surface, in normal temperature and humidity, subject to good ventilation. Only you know how the paint has been applied and in what conditions, so times will vary.

Try not to apply paint in extremes of temperature but if you do, you must expect that you may not get a perfect finish, no matter how good the paint. Too cold or humid, it will take an age to dry, and if allowed to become wet or freeze, it will ruin the finish.

Too hot, and you will quickly lose your wet edge, the paint surface will dry very quickly (possibly, in the time it takes to reload your roller or brush) and will look patchy. This can be a particular problem with modern high opacity emulsion paints, especially when painting a ceiling in the middle of a summer heat wave but it will also affect solvent and water-based trim (used on wood and metal) paints. In the case of a water-based paint, about 5% of water can be added to help extend the wet edge in such conditions.

Paint, when applied onto a nonporous surface, dries from the outside, in. The first drying stage is 'Touch Dry'; this is when the paint appears not sticky to the lightest touch but still soft underneath. Paint will continue to harden as the carrier medium (this is either the solvent or water, which holds the paint in suspension) evaporates into the atmosphere. When the paint appears to be fully dry to the touch, this is known as the 'Dry Time' and the point at which the paint becomes 'Recoatable' (i.e. time quoted on the tin). This is the earliest point when a further coat can be applied without damaging the previous one. Whilst the paint appears to be dry, it is not hard and will continue to harden over a period of time. This is why we ask you not to wipe clean paint for at least 7 days after application. Some solvent based paints, depending on applied thickness, can take over a month to become fully dry, so don't rub too hard. This is not applicable to just Wickes paints but to all manufactures'.

Yellowing of solvent based trim paints

Yellowing has been a problem with this type of paint, almost since it was invented. Primarily, it is caused by oxidation of solvent based coatings (reaction to air) due to the way this type of paint cures. This can be exacerbated by heat from radiators, fires, covering paintwork and low light levels. Ultraviolet radiation, which is the part of sunlight that turns you brown, helps this type of paint stay white (or on colour), by reducing the yellowing process – it's a bit like using bleach on a cloth. If this is a problem in your house, use water-based paint, as it is less prone to yellowing with age. If you have a problem with localised yellow/brown patches or circles, this is usually caused by oily wood or knots behind the paint. If you have this problem, strip back to bare wood, coat with knotting solution and start again.

Paints which are water based are commonly called **Emulsion or acrylic paints** and brushes and utensils are usually cleaned in water.

Those which are resin based are commonly called **Solvent (or oil) based paints**, brushes and utensils generally need cleaning in White Spirit.

Traditionally, differences between the two types are in durability, flexibility, resistance to knocks, flaking, moisture, covering ability, cost, plus many other matters, but all types are formulated to do certain jobs in the best possible way, with Acrylic based paints now offering many of the same benefits as solvent based paints.

Emulsion Paints and Acrylic Paints

These paints are designed to cover large areas such as plastered or plasterboarded walls and ceilings in the most economical way.

Some wallcoverings such as lining paper, embossed and relief papers, are also intended to be coated with an emulsion paint.

Modern emulsion paints include a vinyl element in their formulation for improved flexibility and strength and you will find that, for interior use, you will be able to purchase Vinyl Matt or Vinyl Silk versions. As their descriptions imply, you have the choice of an emulsion with a non-glossy flat finish or one with a high sheen. Wickes Vinyl Matt and Silk emulsions are available in a wide choice of colours.

Wickes Pink to White Paint allows you to see where you've been. This product is pink when wet, then turns white as it dries. This product is applied in the same way as a traditional Emulsion and is great when redecorating white surfaces and working in poor lighting.

Basecoat Emulsion paint has been developed to treat surfaces that have deteriorated and are heavily affected by hairline cracks. This paint reduces the amount of filling and preparation required on difficult surfaces. It's also great for covering patchy surfaces that have been filled and has excellent opacity (ability to cover) so covers deep and contrasting colours very well, providing the ideal base for wall and ceiling paints.

Acrylic Water Based Paints

Acrylic water based paints are premium quality finishes that have been made using tough and durable Acrylic resins giving greater durability and performance than Emulsion paints.

Wickes Bathroom paint is one example. This is a mid sheen finish specifically for use in areas subject to high levels of condensation and provides a highly washable surface on walls and ceilings that are affected by steam, moisture, grease and grime.

Wickes Durable Matt also fits within this category. This practical emulsion retains a popular Matt finish but is fully scrubbable for longer lasting results.

Quick Dry Gloss and Satin finishes are also in the Acrylic family and have been developed to paint trim such as wood and metalwork in the home, making them ideal alternatives to Solvent based finishes.

These products offer all the benefits of water based paints such as low odour, a quick drying time, and the ability to wash equipment in water, but also provide high levels of durability. They are applied virtually in the same way as a Solvent based paint but for best results, a synthetic brush should be used.

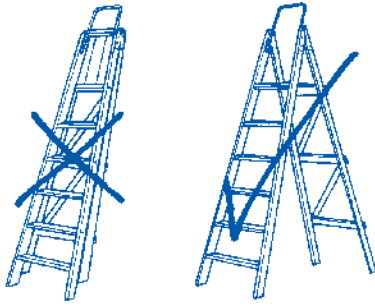
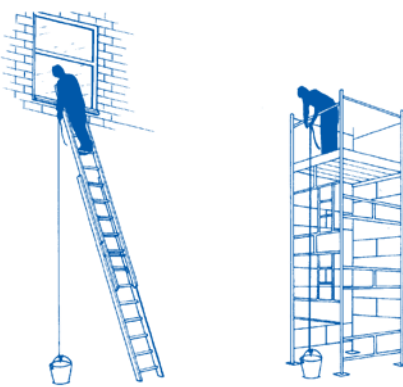
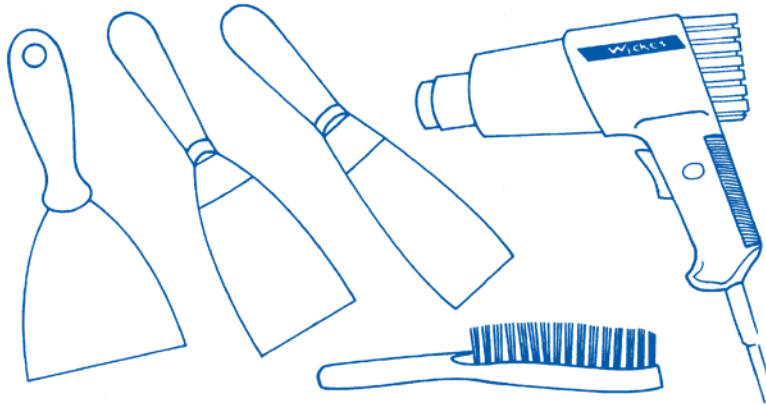
Exterior water based masonry paints are acrylic based and formulated from tough acrylic resins to help cope with the extreme effects of the weather. The choice extends to smooth or textured finishes. **Wickes Smooth Masonry Paint** is intended for use on smooth or a rough pebble dashed wall. **Wickes Textured Masonry Paint** is for use on smooth walls which require a textured effect. Also a good reason for application is the need to bridge non structural hairline cracks or to hide surface defects. **Wickes Self-Cleaning Masonry Paint** contains silicone for a water resistant finish that enables rain to wash away dirt.

Solvent or oil based paints

A number of different paints fit into this category but the majority are paints designed for the protection and decoration of interior or exterior wood and metal. These paints are often just called 'gloss paints'.

For years, the same paints, along with their primers and undercoats, were used inside and out and it is perhaps not surprising that it was necessary to decorate the outside woodwork far more often.

In recent years, paints have undergone many changes.

Fig. 1**Fig. 2****Fig. 3****Fig. 4**

Quality '**Gloss Paints**' for exterior use are formulated to withstand the weather, to expand and contract in the same way that timber does, to allow moisture trapped in the timber to evaporate, and generally last much longer. The ability to let timber 'breathe' is of major importance, this is achieved in many exterior paints by a system in which the paint does not form an impermeable skin over the surface. Instead, and explained in simple terms, it dries to form a series of platelets overlapping each other. You cannot see, lift or peel them off but they do move to allow for expansion, contraction, and breathing to take place. With previous paints the reaction to any of the above would have been cracking, peeling or lifting of the paint film. Such exterior paints must be used with a primer with similar characteristics and formulated for exterior use.

For **interior use**, such sophistication is not necessary and more conventional paints are used. These include primers and undercoats. A primer is applied to bare woodwork to prevent excessive and unnecessary absorption of undercoats, topcoats and also provide lasting adhesion to the substrate. Undercoat serves to

provide a pigmented base, which enhances the overall appearance of the topcoat.

Again, advances in paint formulation have developed combined primer/undercoats, which are generally acrylic based. Topcoats may be either a gloss, satin or eggshell finish. Gloss may come in a non-drip form or liquid, they both do the same job except the non drip version is supplied in gel form called thixotropic. The structure enables you to load your brush and transfer the paint from the can to the surface without the risk of drips coming off the brush. Only when the paint is brushed out will the gel break down and the paint revert to a liquid structure. The Wickes range also includes glosses and satins in both One Coat and Quick Dry, for easy application, plus a full range of primers, undercoats and topcoats.

Metal Paint

Metal paint is very easy to use, not always needing a primer but the surface must be clean, firm, lightly abraded and grease free. Formulated for use in, and outside the home, it can be bought in a spray or for use with a brush – both leaving a beautiful finish but it

is not suitable for use on cars, trucks busses and trailers. If you need a protective coating for one of these, talk to the manufacturer. Should you wish to use metal paint over a galvanised surface, a red oxide primer must first be used, otherwise the paint will flake off

USING THE MOST SUITABLE TOOLS

In terms of painting and decorating, tools range from equipment enabling you to gain safe access to the part of the house to be decorated, to the brushes or rollers used to apply the paint.

Access equipment

For most interior painting you will seldom need more than a good set of stepladders with a platform at the top and a handle to hold. The platform is intended as somewhere to put your paint pot rather than a place on which to stand. You may need longer ladders when working in a stairwell and the extension ladders or access tower, mentioned shortly, may be required.

ALWAYS use stepladders fully opened and with all four feet firmly on the floor. Never lean unopened ladders against a wall or other prop. Fig.1

For outside work, you will need longer ladders to reach up to eaves level and extension ladders will serve the purpose. Make sure that they are always set on firm ground, cannot slip or slide on wet ground, and are ideally secured at the top to an eave hooks, for added security.

Scaffold or access towers allow far greater freedom of movement and are safer than ladders, since you stand on a platform some 1200mm wide and have space to move and lay out working materials. Safety precautions must still be taken to ensure the stability of the tower but in practice, they are safer and more adaptable than ladders. Towers with base dimensions of about 1200 x 600mm can also be used very conveniently indoors when decorating stairwells for example. Wickes stock these.

An access accessory is a length of rope! When working up a ladder or scaffold tower, it is far easier to haul up your working tools and even the paint in a bucket on the end of a rope rather than trying to carry it all up in one hand whilst the other hand holds the ladder. **Fig. 2**

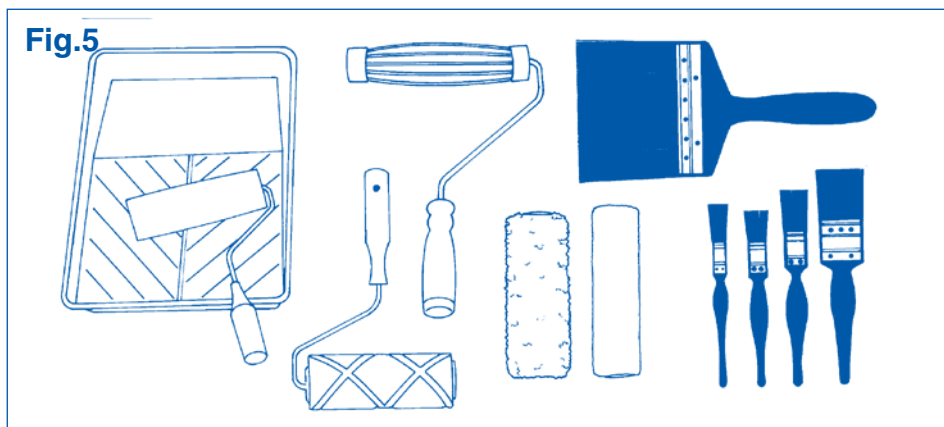
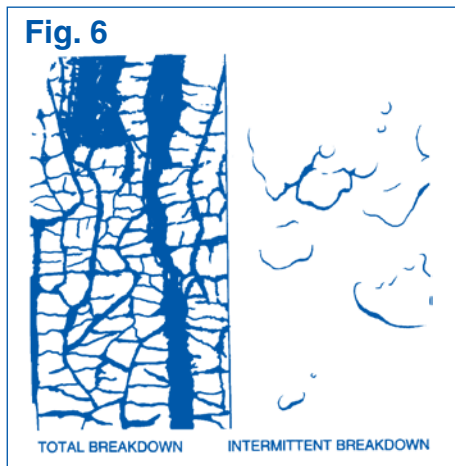
Tools for preparatory work

Careful preparation of surfaces to be decorated is the key to a job well done. To achieve good preparation you will require a selection of basic tools used both indoors and outside.

Essentials will be scrapers to remove flaking paint, filling knives to make good defective woodwork, plaster or rendering, a wire brush, again to remove flaking paint from, especially, metal such as guttering, downpipes, wrought iron or window frames, perhaps an electric heat gun for the removal of old paint - the Wickes Hot Air Gun is ideal - a selection of Wickes abrasive papers and an, old brush for removing dust. **Fig. 3**

Health and Safety

As the selection of tools may suggest, the initial preparation of surfaces is likely to be a dirt and dust creating exercise. It is essential therefore that precautions are taken to protect yourself from the damaging effects of such

Fig.5**Fig. 6**

dirt. You must wear a nose and mouth mask to prevent inhalation of the dust. You should wear safety glasses for any job which results in specks of dirt being thrown up or splashes which could damage the eyes. Gloves provide good protection for the hands when working on rough surfaces or with a tool such as a hot air paint stripper.

Don't take risks - wear safety equipment. It is all available at Wickes.

Fig. 4

Protect furniture and furnishings indoors with dust sheets if you cannot remove all items at risk from the area. Always read the precautions on the product before use.

Tools for application purposes

Paint brushes top the list of requirements and you will need a selection because it is advisable to keep brushes for specific purposes. The brushes you use for applying white oil based paint should not be the same ones you use for coloured oil based paints. It is very difficult to clean brushes so well that residue from a colour does not contaminate white used some time later.

Because of the way brushes wear, those that you use for emulsion paints on walls should not be used on timber or metal where a very much smoother finish is normally required. Masonry use will wear brushes down and textured paints are very hard on brushes.

For emulsion paint you will need a wide brush, anything from 100mm to 150mm with the smaller one being the most common size and the easiest to handle when loaded with paint. Emulsion brushes are used for applying exterior masonry paints also.

A narrower brush, 38mm or 50mm, will be needed for the application of emulsion paint in

situations where detailed work is needed.

You may well prefer to use a roller for the application of emulsion paints. If this is the case you will also need a paint tray and again a narrow brush, about 50mm for applying paint into corners prior to the use of the roller.

Different roller sleeves are needed for different jobs. For the application of interior emulsion onto smooth walls use a short pile sleeve or a foam sleeve. On textured or rough surfaces, use a sleeve with a longer pile, and for texturing work, use a foam sleeve which is preshaped to the required patterning. A long pile standard roller will create a stippled effect on textured paint.

For oil based paint work, you'll need a selection of brushes from about 12mm wide up to 75mm wide - for detail work to the painting of large flat areas such as doors. A window brush at about 18mm wide is shaped to permit cutting in work to be done.

Whatever paintwork is being done, except roller work, it is better to decant paint into a paint kettle rather than using it straight from the can. The can will invariably end up with paint runs down the sides and around the rim. It will become difficult to close, apart from being difficult to hold securely.

All the time you are painting you will need cloths to wipe up the almost inevitable drips and for oil based painting you should keep White Spirit handy since the cloths should be dampened with this to clean up. A full range of application tools and accessories is available from Wickes.

Fig. 5

The key to successful painting is good preparation of the surfaces to which the coat/s of paint will be applied. Careful preparation will pay dividends.

PREPARING SURFACES

Bare Timber

Previously unpainted timber should initially be sanded smooth. Fill any cracks with woodfiller and sand down to finish flush with the timber surface. If knots in the timber are 'sticky' or show signs of excess resin, first remove this by wiping over the area with White Spirit to remove the resin. Then coat the area with either **Wickes Traditional Knotting Solution** or **Wickes Aluminium Wood Primer** to seal the knot. Loose knots are best removed and the resulting holes filled or they should be glued back into place. Use an exterior grade of filler or wood adhesive if the timber is destined for outside.

If new timber is to be used outside, surfaces which cannot be treated when in place are treated before being taken outside. An example would be replacement fascia boards, the back of which will be inaccessible when fixed. Such surfaces should be treated with preservative.

Previously painted - timber in good condition

Wash painted timber very thoroughly with water to which **Wickes Sugar Soap** has been added. This serves not only to clean the surface but also to remove some of the gloss. A gentle sanding down with a fine grade glasspaper will have the same effect. New paints do not key well to glossy surfaces and will chip off easily.

After cleaning and sanding the surface, inspect it closely for any signs of defects such as hairline cracks or surface bubbling. Pay special attention to joints which are normally the first places to suffer from the effects of deteriorating paint films.

Small areas showing signs of slight deterioration may be repaired without having to strip the entire surface. Sand the affected area to remove all defective paint leaving only paint in good condition. If bare wood is exposed, prime the area and when dry, sand to blend the primer in with the old paint film.

Previously painted - timber in poor condition

In virtually all cases, where old paint films, particularly those outdoors, have broken down allowing the timber below to become exposed to moisture penetration, the only answer is to completely strip the old paint, make good, and start from scratch. An exception is where the deterioration is intermittent and repairs as detailed above can be achieved. **Fig. 6**

Completely stripping off oil based paints can be achieved in one of three ways:-

1. Physically sanding off
2. Removing with a chemical stripper
3. Removing using a hot air stripper

NOTE: Take care when sanding down old paintwork. Special precautions should be taken when sanding down surfaces painted before 1960 due to the possibility of lead in the paint. Use wetted Wickes Wet and Dry Sandpaper to reduce the potential risk.

Physically sanding off paint

This is not an easy task and few people would want to consider it as a job to be done by hand using abrasive sheets but it is possible. Given the use of a powered sander the task becomes more feasible over flat surfaces but is still not easy. A great deal of dust is created and a nose and mouth mask must be worn. Use an orbital sander with a flat base rather than a circular sander which can easily cut too deeply leaving indentations in the timber surface. **Fig. 7 (see following page)**

Removing paint with a chemical stripper

Suitable for use on oil based paints only, these chemical strippers are brushed onto the paint surface, left for a while to soften the paint, then the remaining stripper and softened paint are scraped off but please read the manufacturers instructions before

Fig. 7

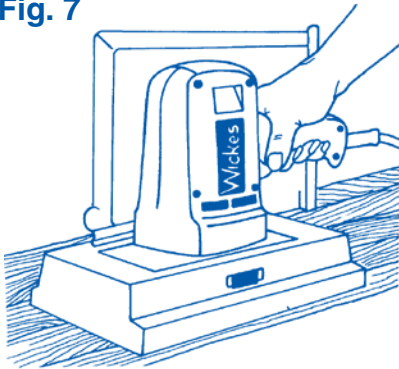


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

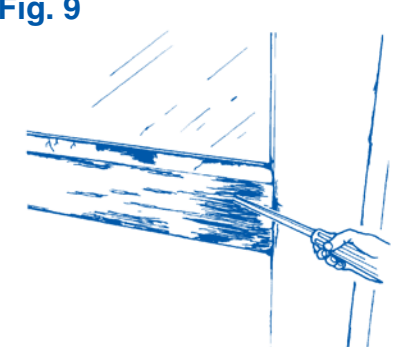
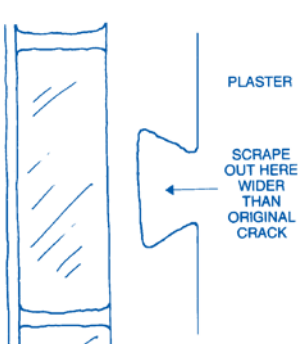


Fig. 10



use. In situations where there are many layers of paint, more than one application of the stripper will probably be necessary. Always wear gloves long sleeves and eye protection.

Note: Keep this type of product away from PVCu surfaces (window frames sills, cladding etc.), vinyl flooring and anything plastic. If you must use near these, mask with a good quality masking tape and quickly wipe off any over spill.

It is essential to wash and dry the surface thoroughly after the use of a paint stripper.

Removing paint with a hot air stripper

A hot air paint stripper is the modern equivalent of the old style blowtorch but with heated air, instead of a flame, used to soften old paint. This is probably the quickest and easiest method of paint removal. It works by blowing air across an electric element and expelling it through a narrow nozzle at about 300 to 600°C, so great care must be taken when using. **Fig. 8**

Air at this temperature will crack glass, melt PVCu window frames and vinyl flooring etc. If held there long enough, will set paint and flammable surfaces alight, so be careful. Wear suitable gloves, eye protection and long sleeves.

Don't place a hot gun on an easily damaged or flammable surface, and whilst this may sound obvious, do not touch the hot end, softened paint or scraper with bare flesh!

That said, this is a great tool when used properly.

Start by practising on a piece of waste or out of the way painted timber. You will quickly get to know how long to heat the old paint, and how close it should be for it to soften enough to be easily removed with a scraper, without scorching the timber beneath.

Note: From cold, the hot air stripper will take anything up to a minute to reach its full working temperature so plan your work and try and keep the gun running, were safe to do so.

For areas near glass, either sand or use a chemical stripper, as appropriate but don't use paint strippers near anything made from PVCu.

Making good old stripped timber surfaces

The removal of layers of paint will undoubtedly uncover surface imperfections and there may even be areas of rotten wood which must be treated before any new paint is applied. Rot is most likely to have developed around window and door frame joints where the jambs meet the sills, so always inspect these areas carefully. Use a penknife blade or a screwdriver to test the hardness of timber in such areas and if the blade penetrates easily you can be sure that the timber is rotten. **Fig. 9**

Treatment usually means cutting away the affected timber, treating what is left with a preservative, then filling in the gaps. Large areas of missing timber can be replaced with new treated timber cut to shape and bedded in filler. If the rot has spread over a wide area you may have to consider replacing complete frames. **If bare stripped timber is not properly treated, with all defects repaired, the new paint will not key properly and its useful life will be greatly reduced.**

Emulsion painted walls and ceilings in good condition

If existing walls and ceilings are in good condition with no signs of flaking paint or other defects, then they only have to be cleaned and lightly abraded before being repainted. Start by clearing the area of furniture and furnishings.

Cover all electrical fittings such as wall lights, switches and power sockets so that water cannot get near them, where possible, cut off the power supply. This will have to be done at the consumer unit. If water does penetrate sockets, switches

or connections, it can prove lethal. Don't take risks.

Wash the ceiling first with sugar soap in warm water. Then make a start on the walls **but start at the bottom and work your way upwards.** This may seem strange but if you start at the top trickles of dirty water will run down the wall and be absorbed, dirt as well, into the dry wall below.

Allow the ceiling and walls to dry thoroughly before repainting.

Applying Matt paint onto a Silk finish

When Applying Matt Emulsion on top of Silk Emulsion, it is very important that the shiny surface is properly prepared, otherwise, when applied, the wet matt topcoat will slide over the surface and will not create a good firm bond. The effect of this will be a patchy finish. Don't be tempted to cut corners or it will create more work later on.

Okay, if you've got this problem, a little time and effort will quickly remedy this.

So, what to do: Firstly, decide if the paint is directly onto plaster or over paper.

If the paint is over paper then the best way is to remove and re-paper the wall, applying fresh paint in the normal way, but if the silk paint is directly onto plaster, you will have no choice but to lightly abrade the surface to remove the sheen and provide a good key. **Tip:** A quick, dust free method, is to wet-scour the surface with a plastic scouring pad and a sugar soap solution, rinse, allow and to dry before painting. If you have time, it is always good practice to paper the wall before painting but you will still need to abrade the surface so the paper will stick.

Emulsion painted walls - in poor condition

Please note the comments in the previous section regarding electrical precautions.

In areas where old emulsion paint is peeling or flaking off it must be removed completely. This will involve hard work with a scraper to remove loose sections followed by equally hard work with a sander to cut back the old emulsion to a sound and well bonded edge. The surface should then be left to dry. During the drying period you may well find additional sections of emulsion lifting and these too must subsequently be removed by scraping and sanding. Make good any defective plasterwork under the old paint.

You will be able to repair minor cracks yourself with a standard plaster filler but for this to be successful and lasting you should work in the following manner:

Using the blunt end of an old screwdriver or similar tool rake out the cracks to make them a little wider and deeper. Remove any dust and loose particles ideally with a suction type vacuum cleaner. Then apply the filler forcing it well into the cracks. Leave it slightly proud of the wall or ceiling surface and only sand it down level when it is dry.

Tip: Apply a thin coat of white paint over the smoothed filled surface and allow to dry. Any imperfections will now be easily seen, in good light, and rectified.

The purpose of the raking out is to provide

Fig. 11

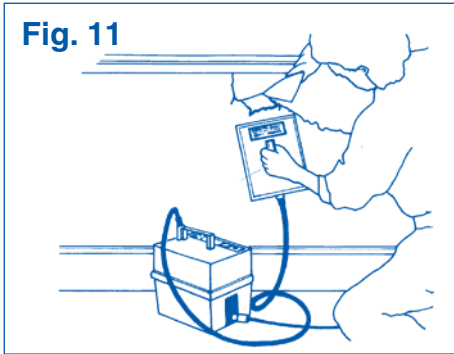
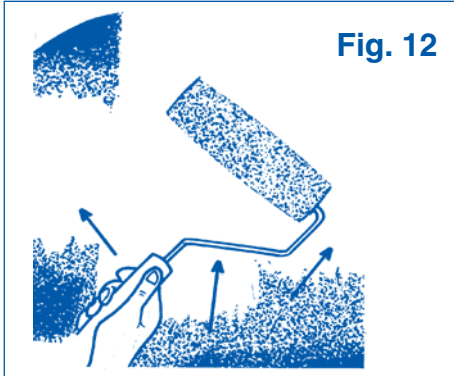


Fig. 12



a considerably larger area to which the filler can key. With a good bond it is far less likely to crack again or fall out. **Fig. 10.** If a wall has been partly stripped but is left with minor surface imperfections such as lines where there is a division between remaining emulsion paint and bare plaster which cannot be sanded down to a smooth edge, you should consider putting lining paper on the walls before repainting. Lining paper provides an excellent base for emulsion paint and levels out many imperfections.

Papered walls

It is not uncommon for people to strip off old wallcoverings and paint the walls instead. Most standard wallcoverings will come away from the wall quite easily if soaked with water for a while. The water penetrates the paper, softens the adhesive and can be easily removed with a wide bladed scraper.

Painted papers and papers which have layer upon layer may prove to be a problem since the water cannot penetrate easily.

In this situation, it is much easier to use a **Wickes steam wallpaper stripper** from the start, rather than trying to scrape off hard old paper. The steam stripper pressurises moisture through the layers, softens them all, and allows speedy stripping to take place. You will quickly learn the knack of using a stripper and discover how long the plate must stay in one place to get right through to the wall behind **Fig. 11**

Note: Always read the machine instructions before use, never let the machine run dry and always place on a flat heat proof surface.

Once a papered wall has been stripped there is one further and very important step before painting can start. All old paste residues must be cleaned off thoroughly using sugar soap and water, cloths and perhaps a scrubbing brush. If the surface feels slippery there is old paste left and you should continue to wash down until it has all gone.

Vinyl wallcoverings will normally peel off easily leaving the backing paper on the wall, if it is in good condition and well bonded to the wall, it

can be used as a lining for paint - or another wallcovering. If not, soak and remove.

Masonry paint and preparation

Masonry paint, unlike emulsion paint, is especially formulated to give a long-lasting, external all weather protection. Its flexible, resists flaking and is suitable for exterior application on roughcast, concrete, stock, facing bricks, sand/cement rendering, pebble-dash – so don't be tempted to save money and use anything else, it'll end up costing you time and money, sooner than you think. By doing the job properly and using the best paint you can afford, you'll probably not have to repaint the outside of your house for the next 15 to 20 years (this assumes normal conditions).

Before you paint, the surface, it must be clean, sound and free from mould. What you use to achieve this state is dependent on the present wall surface. A stiff brush or an anti-fungal wash, should do the job but if its bad, you may have to use a light power wash – but be careful and let the wall dry out fully, before applying paint.

Once you have a good, clean, dry surface, you should patch test the wall (see below). If you are painting more than one wall or the whole house and garage, patch test each wall separately – don't assume they'll be all the same.

New surfaces: All surfaces should be clean, sound, clean and dry. Free from anything that will interfere with the adhesion of the paint. Patch test and stabilise the surface as required.

Uncoated surfaces: As with 'new surfaces', all surfaces must be sound, dry and free from anything that will interfere with the adhesion of the paint. You must remove all organic growth by scraping or brushing with a stiff, none wire, brush. Established growth may need to be removed by pressure washing but be careful not to damage the underlying surface or force water through joins. If it is really bad, you may have to consider wet or dry grit blasting. When this is done, treat the surface with a fungicidal wash. Allow to dry and fill any cracks. Patch test and stabilise the surface as required.

Previously decorated surfaces

As with 'new surfaces', all surfaces must be sound, dry and free from anything that will interfere with the adhesion of the paint. Loose or failing paint must be removed. Washing the surface with a liquid detergent or a sugar soap solution will remove contaminants and improve paint adhesion. Any glossy or eggshell paint surfaces must be abraded to provide a key. Any organic growth must be removed by scraping or brushing with a stiff, none wire, brush. Established growth may need to be removed by pressure washing but be careful not to damage the underlying surface or force water through joins. When this is done, treat the surface with a fungicidal wash. Allow to dry and fill any cracks. Patch test (see below) and stabilise the surface (see below) as required.

Staining

Should there be any staining evident i.e. rust etc., treat with a stain blocking solution or this will bleed through the new paint.

Patch testing

After good preparation, this is probably the most important part of achieving a good, long lasting finish

Why test an external wall before painting? Simply put; all walls weather differently, depending which way the face. The best painting surface is one that has the correct degree porosity, is dust free, clean and is sound, onto which paint will adhere. Every surface is different. If you use too much solution, you will seal the wall completely, the paint will not stick properly, start to blister, then flake off, leaving you no alternative but to remove the paint, and stabilising solution, mechanically (which is a real pain and very hard work with a wire brush). Use too little, and you will spend a fortune on extra paint (think blotting paper), it will look patchy and probably won't adhere very well, so you could be repainting as soon as next year!

A patch test will highlight any potential problem such as porosity, flakiness, cracking, and peeling, it will also indicate the correct ratio of stabilising solution and water.

How to Patch Test

Start by masking off a small part of wall as a test area. Dilute a small amount of stabilising solution 50/50 with water and prime the test area. Allow to dry. If the surface is still soft and/or dusty you need to adjust the mixture – 2 parts solution to 1 part water, and so on, until the wall surface is about right. If the wall appears shiny when dry, you need to reduce the amount of solution and increase the water (make sure you remove the shiny surface with a wire brush before you paint or it won't adhere properly). When the surface patch is correctly sealed, paint with the masonry paint and allow too dry – the paint should not be patchy but firmly adhered and smooth. Repeat for all walls as necessary. Seal each wall with the correct ratio of stabilizing solution, allow too dry, and then apply the masonry paint.

Stabilising Solution

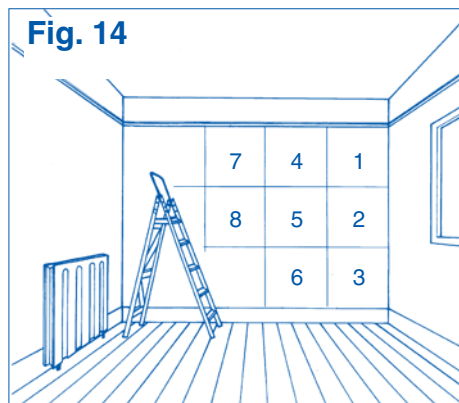
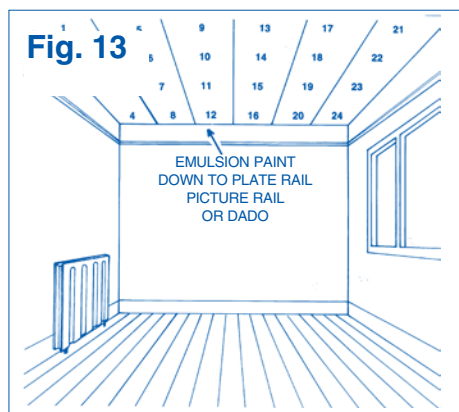
Stabilising Solution is a clear, highly penetrative primer, specially formulated to bind dusty or chalky exterior masonry surfaces. It is also ideal for lowering the absorbency of very porous exterior masonry surfaces.

Why is it used? As it ages, the paint surface, and the Masonry below can become like blotting paper, due to the effects of rain, frost and sun, eventually leaving the surface soft and powdery. As this happens, the surface will adsorb more and more water. When this freezes, thaws and dries, over and over again, the surface slowly degenerates and becomes soft and powdery. Providing this process has not gone too far, it can be stabilised using a 'Stabilising Solution' but you must patch test each wall before painting, as each surface can differ due to their age and location. The idea is to make the surface good enough for painting but not so good that paint won't stay attached for the next 15 to 20 years - some absorbency is still required for the paint to key (grab hold) and as such, stabilising solution should be used sparingly (you can always add more, but its very hard to remove!).

APPLYING PAINT

Painting interior woodwork Priming

If the woodwork is bare, you must always start with a coat of primer to seal the timber.



This prevents it soaking up later coats of paint and provides a suitable key for later coats. You can use a standard primer, an aluminium primer/sealer or a combined acrylic primer/undercoat. In all cases the timber must be dry and as dust free as possible. Brush on the primer working along the grain. Sand smooth when dry.

Undercoat

An undercoat is what its name suggests - something that goes under a top coat, in this case, paint. Okay, that said, what is its purpose? A good undercoat is there to provide an opaque layer of a similar colour to the topcoat but its main purpose is to level minor undulations in the timber below (it's a little like filling small cracks in plaster with a fine filler paste, to leave a smooth surface). A good quality undercoat should not be too thin or too thick, as its part of a system built-up in thin layers. This is the layer that helps the top coat look really flat and smooth. Before applying the top coat to the undercoat, the dry surface should be sanded gently and wiped clean with a damp cloth.

Applying the Topcoat

The following applies to timber which has been primed and undercoated, or previously painted timber with the old paint still in good condition but cleaned.

If all the preparation work has been done carefully the surface should be dry, smooth and free of dust.

Load the brush so that paint is about halfway up the bristles. Apply the topcoat along the grain, brush it out across the grain, and then finish with gentle strokes with the brush along the grain again. Do not overbrush leaving a very thin film of paint, but leave a coating which does not show signs of sagging on vertical surfaces or 'puddling' on horizontal ones. **It is better to apply two relatively thin layers of topcoat than one thick one. More problems are caused by excessive thickness than are caused by thin coatings.**

Painting metal

If metal, such as cast iron, used for guttering, downpipes and wrought iron work, has been properly prepared and any rust removed, it can be primed and over coated with **Wickes High Performance Metal Paint** or alternatively the selected **Wickes Metal Primer**, subsequent undercoat and finish of your choice.

Totally new steel or cast iron should be de-greased before applying a primer or **Wickes High Performance Metal Paints**. Galvanised surfaces must be primed.

Painting Exterior Woodwork

If using traditional oil or water-based paints, the technique is the same as for interior work with just a little extra care being taken to ensure complete coverage so that there is no possibility of moisture penetration. On window frames, for example, the sill ends and undersides of the sills must be fully painted.

When painting outside, avoid working in full hot sunlight. This can prevent oil-based paints drying properly and may cause it to bubble or water-based paint to dry too quickly. If the timber contains moisture this can heat up and almost steam. It will certainly expand and will be able to lift a paint film. Wait until the hot sun has moved on to another part of the house and then start painting. Don't paint if rain is expected or if there is the risk of frost before new paintwork has dried. Similarly, at times of the year when mornings and evenings are subject to moisture in the air - dew - aim to paint as soon as the air dries in the morning and allow plenty of time for the paint to dry before the evening dampness comes in. Use quick drying paints whenever possible at these damp times of the year.

Remember that if using Wickes Exterior Gloss this should only be applied over a primer also designed to allow timber to breathe, expand and contract. Wickes Exterior Primer Undercoat is formulated for this purpose. A separate undercoat is not required.

Painting interior walls and ceilings

Again it is assumed that, at this stage, old surfaces have been prepared as previously described.

Tip: If you don't want it covered in paint, cover or remove.

Newly plastered walls should be left for a month before any paint is applied and then an initial coat of thinned emulsion should be applied as a primer before the full strength coats are put on. The priming coat should be about one part water to two parts emulsion. If work has to be carried out prior to the plaster being fully dry then use **Wickes Trade Matt Paint for New Plaster or Trade Matt emulsion**.

Painting with a roller is by far the quickest way to deal with ceilings and walls, but a little practice with the roller and emulsion paint onto a board or similar item will be useful. It will give you an idea of how to load the roller by gently moving it backwards and forwards in the paint, in the paint tray. It will indicate just how quickly to spread the paint avoiding splashes which are caused by too speedy an application, and it will indicate the rolling direction which gives the most even coverage.

Tip: Don't paint when it is too hot or too cold.

You will find that a loaded roller needs to be moved quite slowly at first in one direction only to put the paint on the surface. The paint can then be spread out sideways by moving the roller diagonally, then it should be finished off in the same direction as the first rolls but with only light pressure on the roller. **Fig. 12**

Cover an area of about one square metre at a time. This will need more than one load of paint on the roller but is the area to cover before moving on to the next section. Blend the application of paint to the next section into that of the one before.

Cover a ceiling in stages as shown in **Fig. 13**. Treat a wall in similar fashion with vertical lines as shown in **Fig. 14**. A roller will not get into corners very well, you will need to apply the paint by brush and roller it out as well as you can to leave an even texture. Walls and ceilings will normally require two coats of emulsion if the colour is to be changed, or one coat if there is no change.

As an alternative to a roller, apply the paint using a wide emulsion brush. You will still be able to achieve a very even finish but the job will take a little longer.

General sequence for interior painting

Painting in any room always starts with the ceiling so that any paint drips or splashes do not cause problems. Include walls down to picture rails (if fitted) or other high level borders as part of the ceiling.

Paint the walls next. In effect you are completing **all** emulsion paintwork and only when this is done do you tackle any oil/water-based satin or gloss work.

Applying Exterior Masonry Paints

When all the dirty work is complete i.e. cleaning out of gutters, the removal of rust, the washing of walls, stripping of exterior woodwork, and making good any defects found. Start decorating all high level painting, such as gutters, fascias and soffits.

Tip: If you can remove guttering, it is worth doing so because the fascias behind are not normally fully treated, unlike other woodwork. This maybe a good time to replace your guttering with a good quality, Wickes, product - see Good Idea Leaflet 60.

Like emulsion, Masonry paint can be applied by a brush or roller and the same application rules apply. Again, don't operate a roller at high speed or you will get more paint on yourself than on the walls.

Tip: Make sure, when painting outside, that your neighbours car is not in the splash zone and anything you don't wish to be spotted in paint, is either covered or moved.

General sequence for exterior painting

Once all preparation, patch testing and stabilisation is complete, start by painting the walls from top to bottom, unless there is a natural horizontal break, which will enable you to do it in two halves. Don't paint in direct sunlight or you will loose the wet line every time you recharge your roller or brush, leaving a patchy finish. Should the weather keep threatening rain, Wickes sell masonry paint that surface dries in less than ten minutes. Always paint evenly and keep going until you meet a natural break or end of section. This

means having enough paint with you to keep going. When the walls are complete, move on to the down-pipes, taking care to protect newly painted walls from gloss paint splashes. Finally, paint the windows and doors. Painting the outside of your house is something you don't have to complete in a week or even a year. You could, if you wish, tackle one elevation per year – If you are painting one elevation a year, think about using Wickes Self Cleaning Masonry paint, then there should be little difference in the shades (dependent on weather conditions and pollution). The aim is to do the work so well that it does not have to be re-painted for a very long time.

Special Effects

Special effects are basically the manipulation of paint colours to make spectacular decorating effects. When first attempting any of the following techniques it is advisable to practice on a piece of waste plasterboard or an inconspicuous area.

Dragging

This creates fine muted stripes but is best reserved for furniture or doors, as keeping brush marks vertical over a complete wall can be difficult. A dragging brush is designed to give a soft, regular effect. Apply colourwash with a standard brush, then lay the dry dragging brush almost flat against the surface and drag down to create stripes. Work on areas of approximately 1m^2 .

Ragging/Bagging

This creates a 'distressed texture' appearance. To achieve this, firstly apply a basecoat of silk or soft sheen emulsion with a brush or roller and allow this to dry. Bunch a rag into the palm of your hand and dab or roll colourwash onto the surface. Using other materials, including plastic bags can vary the effect. Alternatively, you can "rag off" by applying colourwash with a brush and removing the excess by dabbing with a clean rag. A bagging roller will produce a similar effect.

Sponging

Keep this simple by using a natural sponge with one colourwash shade or alternatively, build up more complex patterns by using several shades. Wipe excess colourwash off the sponge then dab quickly onto the wall using a light motion. Start at the top of the wall, spacing out prints and changing the direction of your hand occasionally. When the sponge gets saturated, clean it with water. Always wait for the first coat to dry before you start on the next.

Graining

Apply a coat of **Wickes Quick Drying Melamine & Tile Primer** followed by your choice of base colour in silk or soft sheen. Then using the graining rocker and graining comb tools together with a colourwash to mimic the effect of real timber. As you pull the rocker down, use a light rocking action to create a knot.

Stencilling

Fix the stencil in position using low tack masking tape. Dip the tip of a stencil brush into the paint. Remove any surplus paint by dabbing it onto kitchen paper until it has an almost dry appearance, as best results are achieved by using very little paint. Hold the brush in an upright position and fill in the shape using a circular dabbing motion.

Paint Coverage

Coverage depends upon the absorbency of the material onto which the paint is to be applied and the paint quality. This is quoted as an average.

To put things into perspective, a standard door has an area of about 3.5m^2 to be painted, including both sides and all edges, especially the bottom edge.

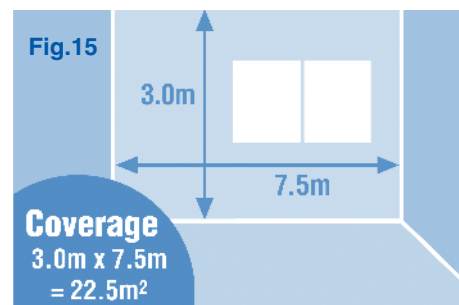
You will need just over a quarter of a litre of primer, a quarter of a litre of undercoat, and a quarter of a litre of oil-based gloss to give the door one coat of each all over.

A wall measuring 2.4 metres high by 4 metres long (8 x 13ft) has an area of 9.6m^2 . A litre of emulsion would be needed to give it one coat assuming it was not very absorbent.

How much paint do I need for my room?

- Multiply the height x width of each wall (see **Fig. 15**). Add the totals for each wall together to get your total coverage area. Remember to subtract any space taken up by doors and windows.
- Look at the coverage icon figure on the back of your paint can (see image below) to find out how many square metres (m^2) it contains.
- Divide your total coverage area by the coverage icon figure. For example: 22.5m^2 (your total coverage area) divided by 27m^2 (paint can coverage icon) = 0.83 cans needed. This will give you the amount of paint required.

Remember, more than one coat may be necessary.



Example of Coverage Icon

Wickes paint ranges symbolise all that is best in quality paints - coverage, durability, reliability, ease of application, wide colour and function choice.